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THE BISHOP'S RAID.

WITH OTHER POEMS.

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"The exploit might furnish no bad subject for a Border ballad, 'THE BISHOP'S RAID.'"—*Surtees's History of the County of Durham.*

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NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE :

A. REID, PRINTING COURT BUILDINGS, AKENSIDE HILL.

1864.

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To the Memory of ROBERT SURTEES, Esq., of Mainsforth, the Historian of the County of Durham, in obedience to whose hint it was written, this Ballad of “The Bishop’s Raid” is reverently dedicated ; and on the Eve of Christmas, 1864, it is presented, with the Compliments of the Season, to the Friends of the Author,

JAMES CLEPHAN.

11, *Saville Row, Newcastle-upon-Tyne.*

THE BISHOP'S RAID.

'TWAS a woeful time for England !
For famine, pest, and sword
Ruled o'er the land more royally
Than her anointed lord.

There was barrenness in autumn,
And hunger through the year :
The earth had lost its fruitfulness,
The soil was curst and sere :

And the carrion-crow its larder
Must leave to famish'd man :
Babes were a mother's nourishment,
Reversing nature's plan :

Yea ! the babe was known to suffer,
A parent's life to save ;
And thieves in prison greedily
Devour'd some brother knave.

'Twas a woeful time for England,
 The second Edward's reign !
 The Scots swarm'd o'er the Borders, and
 Northumberland lay slain :

It was slain by pest and famine ;
 By edge of sword it bled ;
 The quick could hardly bury all,
 And envied sore the dead.*

Such was the time my story
 Fell out 'twixt Tees and Tweed—
 A time for wail and misery
 None other can exceed.

Brave Richard, count and bishop,
 This sea of troubles rode :
 With sword and crosier reign'd his hour,
 In Durham's ancient mode.

* The year 1317 was marked by a repetition of invasion by the Scots, and of all the horrors attendant on the progress of an exasperated and avenging enemy. Three successive years of sterility had carried the public distress to the highest pitch. The ravages of scarcity and sickness were not confined to the North; and the general calamities of the times are described by the contemporary historians in terms almost too highly-coloured to meet belief. Prisoners devoured each other in the gaols, and mothers hid their children lest they should furnish a repast equally horrid. (*Surtees.*) The dearth was so great in Northumberland, in 1317, that the people were obliged to eat the flesh of horses and dogs. (*Hutchinson.*) There was a grievous famine and mortality at Newcastle, "insomuch," says Bourne, "that the quick could hardly bury the dead; and a great corruption of cattle and grass. Some ate the flesh of their own children; and thieves in prison devoured those that were newly brought in, and greedily ate them half-alive." (*Brand.*)

He died ; and now the Convent
Must choose another lord.

The monks were canvass'd by the king,
The queen their votes implored.

Her cripple-cousin Beaumont,
The mitre he must wear.

The Cowl was sturdy 'gainst the Crown,
And deaf to Edward's prayer.

Earls Lancaster and Pembroke,
And Hereford, the door
Besieged ; and Henry Beaumont, too ;
With lawless ramp and roar.

The savage nobles hector'd,
To beat the Convent down :
They swore "that if a monk they chose,
They'd split his shaven crown."

Bold-hearted monks ! nor baron
Nor king could make them rue :
They stood up for their ancient rights—
Were to their order true.

Henry, the monk of Stamford—
Of Finchale prior he :
This was the man the Convent chose
Of Durham lord to be.

He, not the stranger Frenchman,
Should reign upon the Wear.
Fierce raved the royal Isabel,
Their stern resolve to hear.

The King of France's daughter
At Edward's feet fell down,
And pray'd with tears the Convent's choice
He'd steadfastly disown.

The Kings of France and England,
They hasten'd to Pope John,
That so his Romish Holiness
For Beaumont might be won.

And when on foot monk Henry,
Outrun by royal speed,
Reach'd Peter's chair, he found the Pope
To him no friend in need.

Queen Isabel's proud cousin
Must have the bishop's chair ;
And Henry to his monkish cell
In Stamford must repair.

The learnéd monk went safely
Upon his modest way :
His vain, illiterate rival—he
Was mark'd for reiver's pray.

With nobles and with gentry,
With knights and squires rode he ;
On either hand a cardinal ;
So Beaumont sought his see.

At Darlington a message
Came to the cavalcade :
The Convent sent the bishop word
Of an intended raid.

But Beaumont scorn'd the warning ;
He would not be appall'd ;
He would, on Cuthbert's festival,
At Durham be install'd.

So, on the rich procession
Pursued the bridle-way,
Past Aycliffe to the Rushy Ford,
In sumptuous array.

On rode the blind lord-bishop,
The cardinals and all,
With richly-laden sumpter-mules,
Whatever might befall.

What might befall, his lordship
Foresaw when 'twas too late ;
For at the ford a cloud of horse
Came down to tell his fate.

Bold men of broken fortunes
Swept down upon the line,
Led on by Gilbert Middleton,
From Mitford 'yont the Tyne.

They captured and they plunder'd,
A sorry sight to see !
The cousin of Queen Isabel,
A woeful wight was he !

Knight, cardinal, and bishop—
Their train was sorely maul'd :
They'd little thought how Beaumont should
In Durham be install'd.

The cardinals, who'd journey'd
His crowning rites to grace,
Must now for mercy in the dust
Their scarlet hats abase.

Sir Gilbert gave the order
The cardinals to spare :
They and their followers must go free—
To harm them none must dare.

All then began a-crying
“The cardinals alone
“Their masters were :” the prelate-prince
For leader none would own..

This would not do ! The reivers,
To put an end to doubt,
In spite of Rome they rifled all,
And turn'd them inside out.

The cardinals, they left them
Their nags to ride away :
The rest were stripp'd of all they had,
At breaking of the day.

The bishop was made captive,
His brother Henry, too,
And borne away to Wansbeck-side,
In castle-keep to mew :

To Morpeth and to Mitford,
To hold to ransom there.
Queen Isabel was frantic when
She heard of Beaumont's lair.

Her cousin held in bondage !
 King Philip's daughter said
 Swift vengeance must o'ertake the knight
 Who led the Border raid.

But nothing cared Sir Gilbert,
 The sheriff's near of kin,
 Who'd suffer'd wrongs at Edward's hands :
 He heeded not a pin.

He heeded not at Mitford
 The anger of the Crown :
 The northern Robin Hood would list
 To nought but money down.

The Church, to win a bishop
 'Twould rather be without,
 Must therefore be prevail'd upon
 To let its treasures out.

Sir Gilbert got his ransom
 (More than his prize was worth);
 And from his Mitford lodgings quick
 The bishop he came forth :
 Came forth to shock the Convent—
 So ignorant and vain !
 But was he not the kinsman of
 A queen ?—then why complain ?*

* Beaumont was consecrated at Westminster on the 26th of March, 1318. The monks must have been shocked and surprised at the strange mixture of levity and ignorance which their new bishop exhibited during the solemnity. Unable to pronounce the word *metropolitice* in the official instrument, he cried out, in his native French, "Let us suppose it read." Proceeding further, *in œnigmatice* stopped him altogether; when he exclaimed, "By Louis ! it is not courteous to introduce such words." (*Longstaffe's Darlington.*)

The BISHOP'S RAID is ended ;
For Gilbert ends so well,
That soon he has another raid,
Which ends but with his knell.

In arms against weak Edward,
The castles of his shire,
Save Alnwick, Norham, Bamborough,
He seized ; and sword and fire,

From Tweed far o'er to Cleveland,
He carried in his wrath,
With dearth and deadly pestilence
Companions of his path.

The scourge aroused the country,
His ravages to stay ;
And as increased the loyalists,
His followers fell away.

Till, falling back on Mitford,
Within his castle-gate
He shut himself securely there,
A better time to wait.

Secure, but for the traitors
Who ate Sir Gilbert's bread
(However he came by it), and
Who sold their leader's head.

Tried and condemn'd in London,
The king gave word that he
Be through the City dragg'd in shame,
And hang'd upon a tree.

Ere dead to be beheaded—
 His head in London shown :
 His heart, the fountain of his crimes
 'Gainst God, and Church, and Throne—

 His heart to be to ashes,
 Where he was hang'd, burnt down :
 His quarters stuck on high, that none
 Might court his dark renown :

 One quarter sent to Dover ;
 To York, its dismal share ;
 To Bristol, one ; the fourth, upon
 Tyne Bridge to cry “ Beware ! ”

 Such was the bloody lesson
 The royal tutor made,
 By head and heart and limb of him
 Who led the BISHOP'S RAID.

 'Twas woeful, then, in England !
 We live in better days.
 To God be glory ; and our lives
 May they express our praise !

 The story of the raid, which is variously told, occupies a page or two of Mr. Hodgson Hinde's volume on “Northumberland.” He says (pp. 299–300) :—In 1317, Pope John, who had been placed at the head of the Latin Church the previous year, resolved to make an effort to effect an accommodation between the King of England and, as he expresses himself, “him who pretends to be King of Scotland.” With this view, having first, of his own authority, proclaimed a truce for two years, he sent two cardinals, John of Ossa and Luke de Fieschi, to mediate a peace. Their mission was fruitless ; but it claims a place in Northumbrian history in connection with one of the most remarkable outrages ever perpetrated in that county. The weak and indecisive measures of King Edward were topics of loud complaint on the Borders, and were made the subject of a remonstrance, which was addressed to the king himself by Adam de Swinburne, the sheriff of the county. This plain speaking was resented by Edward, who committed the sheriff to prison. The flame of rebellion, which had long smouldered among the plundered and perse-

cuted Northumbrians, now burst forth. Having in vain looked to the king for protection, they refused longer to submit to his capricious and violent government. Among the malcontents was Gilbert de Middleton, a near relative of John de Middleton of Belsay, and a cousin of Adam de Swinburne, the late sheriff. In his hands was the strong castle of Mitford, of which he seems to have been constable under Aymer de Valence, the proprietor. This fortress afforded an admirable retreat for the insurgents, who chose Gilbert de Middleton for their chief. Whatever may have been their original intentions, their operations soon degenerated into a system of organized plunder :—and this in a district already impoverished by the repeated ravages of the Scots. In one of their predatory incursions, Gilbert and his associates fell in with the two cardinals as they were travelling from Darlington to Durham, in company with the bishop of the diocese, and his brother Lord Henry de Beaumont. The site of the rencontre appears, from an entry in the *Rotuli Scotiae*, to have been at Hett, in the parish of Merrington, where the ecclesiastics were secured without resistance. The two cardinals were allowed to proceed on their journey; but the bishop and his brother were carried with them, the former being retained at Morpeth, the latter at Mitford, until heavy ransoms were paid for their release. With this daring act the career of Middleton was brought to a close, his capture being shortly afterwards effected by some of his neighbours, who had suffered from his depredations, and laid wait for him. He was conveyed to London, tried, and executed; and his own estates, and those of many of his followers, confiscated. Some of his band escaped to Horton Castle, where they were received under the protection of Walter Selby, a brother freebooter, who there maintained himself in defiance of the authorities on either side of the Border.

Mr. Longstaffe, after an examination of the evidences, comes to the conclusion, as to the place of capture, "that Rushyford is entitled to the preference." (*Archæologia Eliana*, vi. 66.) He quotes Surtees :— "At the Rushyford, midway betwixt the small villages of Woodham and Ferryhill, the road crosses a small and sullen rivulet, in a low and sequestered spot, well-calculated for surprise and the prevention of escape. In *Rymer's Fœderæ*, the robbery is said to have taken place at Aile, perhaps Acle, i.e. Aycliffe, three miles south from Rushyford, where the passage over the Skerne would be equally convenient. The exploit might furnish no bad subject for a Border ballad, 'THE BISHOP'S RAID.' "

The ballad is now written; and the writer, in executing a commission which no worthier hand had undertaken, has kept as close as possible to chronicle and history. The same remark also applies to the ballad of "THE DEATH OF WALCHER," and other historical poems, printed on subsequent pages.

THE DEATH OF WALCHER.

IT was in the flowering month of May,
Twice winters seven had flown
Since Harold the Saxon king was slain,
By William overthrown.

Earl Waltheof, giant Siward's son,
Lay bloody in his grave
At Croyland ; slaughter'd on the block
The Norman's crown to save.

His head upon his shoulders broad,
The Conqueror lived in fear :
At Winchester the axe must fall,
And end the Saxon peer.

And Egelwin—last bishop he
Of Saxondom who sway'd
The crook on Durham's sacred mount—
To peace of death was laid :

A fugitive, contemn'd of all,
Weak, avaricious, sly,
In Norman toils at Abingdon
'Twas his to meanly die.

Old Walcher of Lorraine was now,
North of the winding Tees,
Both prince and bishop too; for so
Did great Duke William please.

Of mild and gentle spirit he,
Not firm in rule and strong—
Wild licence boldly walk'd abroad,
And good men suffer'd wrong.

The Eli of the Church, nor free
From sins that were his own,
He shame and hate incur'd by deeds
Of men around his throne.

The Saxon noble, Liulph, loved
By his own people all,
To Siward and Gospatric kin,
And reverend in his fall,

Dwelt under Walcher's solemn pledge,
He and his household dear,
O'ershadow'd by the castle walls
Upon the banks of Wear.

With Adelgitha, of the blood
Of Uchtred, dwelt he there,
His “little chickens and their dam”
About him in his lair.

At dead of night came Leofwine,
The bishop's chaplain he,
Who'd menaced oft the Saxon lord,
And Walcher there to see.

With Leofwine was Gilbert fierce,
(Kinsman, and sheriff too,
Of Walcher,) and stout men of arms,
Their lawless will to do.

Lord Liulph, in unguarded sleep,
With all his household lay :
They slept the sleep of death before
The peaceful dawn of day.

The horror ran from Wear to Tees—
To Tyne and distant Tweed :
All native hearts were fill'd with fire,
And wrathful at the deed.

The treacherous crime must be avenged :
The Norman must make good,
By his own life, for sacrifice
Of precious Saxon blood.

The pent-up fire of freeborn men,
Subdued to foreign yoke,
To open flame that must devour
Through Liulph's death had broke.

In vain weak Walcher met with words
The storm of human wrath,
Which rose and raged as though 'twould sweep
The bishop from its path.

In hope to still the tempest down,
He sent to South and North,
And West and East, all o'er his see,
His urgent summons forth.

At Gateshead, where St. Mary's church,
Among the spreading oaks,
O'erlook'd the flowing Tyne below,
A council he invokes,

To deal with Liulph's death, and by
Collective cunning find
Some subtle means to soften down
The outraged Saxon mind.

'Twas in the flowering month of May,
Twice winters seven had flown
Since Harold was at Hastings slain,
By William overthrown.

In May, upon the fourteenth day,
His council Walcher met:
His throne was in Our Lady's church
In Gateshead parish set.

The Norman chiefs in Church and State,
Beside him and before,
Were gather'd there; and loud without
Was heard the angry roar

Of Saxon men, whom Eadulf Rus,
Gospatric's grandson, led,
Descendant of great Uchtred, long
The brave and honour'd head

Of lands that stretch'd from Humber's flood
Far northward to the Tweed—
A stalwart earl, renown'd in war
And peace, by word and deed.

Prince-bishop and the Saxon came
To parley on the spot.
The Norman trimm'd; and Saxon blood
From warm grew madly hot.

Alarm'd, the prelate was prepared
To make some compromise:
His sheriff Gilbert he would give
For instant sacrifice.

The Saxons with derision heard
The bishop thus propose
To yield a part, when all were there
At mercy of their foes.

Doom'd Gilbert and his band they slew,
And likewise Leofwine;
Nor yet content that so should end
This council of the Tyne.

Had Walcher not in friendship lived
With Liulph's murderers twain?
Was not upon his head the blood
Of him so foully slain?

"Short red, good red," the leaders cried:
Short reckoning is the best.
"Short red, good red: the bishop slay!"
Such was their fell behest.

The trembling Walcher, who before
Urged Leofwine to brave
The storm without—his life, mayhap,
From Saxon steel to save—

Now shrunk within the 'leagured church,
With guard of Norman swords.
Alas ! nor wall nor gleaming blade
A safe defence affords !

"Short red, good red ! the bishop slay !"
Nought can their purpose turn.
Bring hither, quick, the flaming torch :
He dies, though church must burn.

The brand is brought—the light applied—
St. Mary's set in flame :
The scorching fire and stifling smoke
Around the Norman came.

Now save yourselves ! The men of mail
Fled swift from Walcher's side ;
And he must choose to die by sword,
Or in the fire abide.

His choice was made. He raised his robes
To veil his aged face,
And from the porch he slowly walk'd,
With dignity and grace.

His finger traced upon his breast
The Christian's sacred sign :
His body he gave up to man—
His soul to the Divine.

No ruth was yet in Saxon hearts :
Not yet appeased their rage
With Gilbert's blood, and Leofwine's :
The bishop's must assuage :—

The bishop's life must close the account ;
And Eadulf Rus stood by,
With deadly spear in hand, by which
The sacrifice must die.

Where, just before, the cross was sign'd,
The thirsting spear was thrust ;
And Saxon swords in meaner hands
Hew'd Walcher to the dust.

"Short red, good red," was echoed back
When William heard the tale
Of Walcher's death : the land, he swore,
The tragedy should wail.

He swore by Splendour of the Heavens,
The Saxon race should rue ;
And northward sent, to wreak his wrath,
The Bishop of Bayeux.

The land, laid waste from Ouse to Tyne
When Cumin and his men
The Saxons slew with sword and fire,
Must now lie waste again.

And Odo, Bishop of Bayeux,
Half-brother of the king,
Must northward speed, with man and horse,
To do this fearful thing.

Unheal'd the scars of Cumin's time,
The Norman scourged anew
Northumbria's unhappy soil,
By Odo of Bayeux.

And often, in the after-days,
By Gateshead's old Oak Well,
Near where, by Eadulf Rus's spear,
The grey-hair'd bishop fell,

The maids and matrons gossipp'd how,
When Liulph he was slain,
The vengeful Saxon shed the blood
Of Walcher of Lorraine.

And some, who 'd seen both Egelwin
And Walcher, told, and sigh'd,
How one, of Saxon bishops last,
Had in a dungeon died;

And how the other, first among
The Norman bishops, came
To cruel death at Saxon hands,
By sword and spear and flame.

No longer, round the old Oak Well,
The gossips now are found;
But still the mournful tale comes down,
Though with uncertain sound;

Still is it told, in hall and cot,
By many a calm fireside,
How Liulph, Lumley's lord, was slain,
And Bishop Walcher died.

THE CHURCH AND THE CASTLE.

WITH shriek and snort rush'd Vulcan's steed
Along the banks of Tyne,
Past Wylam's classic cot—of George,
Great master-smith, the shrine—
His cradle-shrine, where Nature school'd
The child with wisest skill
Whom she design'd through coming time
A world-wide throne to fill.

And now, with speed that mocks the wind,
We pass on either side
The Norman keep that lies a wreck,
The church that doth abide.
Umfréville's walls on Prudhoe's steep—
Their pride hath pass'd away :
Baronial force, on England's ground, 's
A thing of yesterday.
The ruin on this verdant knoll
Lends beauty to the scene—
A moral points, and tells a tale
Of what in yore hath been.

'Tis but a fragment of the past ;
While yonder Saxon fane
Doth still, and with an added grace,
Its ancient use maintain.

How sweetly on yon sunny bank
Stands Ovingham's grey tower,
Where Bewick's bones were laid to rest,
When past his little hour !
That scene, more sacred than before,
Since now his dust it shrines,
How loved he, with his touch of skill,
To grave in fairest lines !

And thou, brave monk, once Master here,
Shall we forget how bold
Thy stand against the Tudor king,
In England's days of old ?
What if thy creed be not our own,
In all its breadth and length,
Honour be thine for putting forth
'Gainst tyranny thy strength :
All honour that thou took'st thy stand
By Prior Lawrence' side,
Last of his line in Hexham, who
For conscience grandly died—
Who died on Tyburn tree, before
He would his faith forswear,
And to the king, as Lord Supreme
In Church, allegiance bear.

Let Faith, not Force, the monarch be !
Speed on, thou car of fire !
Make the rough places plain, O Steam !
Work out high Heaven's desire.

Bring down the hills, exalt the vales,
 Make straight the crookéd way ;
And to and fro let Knowledge run,
 And haste the coming day,
When Right and Truth and Love shall fill,
 And Faith, not Force, the throne ;
When done the Church's perfect work,
 The Castle all unknown.

Hexham Abbey, on the 28th of September, 1536, was visited by Commissioners appointed to carry the Dissolution into effect. No prior had been appointed since the death of Lawrence, hanged at Tyburn in 1535 ; “ and the sub-prior appears to have been a timid man ; but amongst the monks was found one possessed of dauntless spirit and resolution, who was determined not to yield without a struggle to the arbitrary exercise of the secular power ; and in this resolution he was vigorously supported by his brethren and their dependents. The name of the leader is not preserved ; but he held the office of master of the cell of Ovingham, founded by the last of the Umfrevilles, barons of Prudhoe.” (*Hodgson Hinde’s Northumberland.*) The Commissioners state, in their account of the proceedings preserved in the Public Record Office, that “ a chalone, called the Maister of Ovingham, being in harness, with a bow bent with arrows, accompanied with divers other persons, all standing upon the leads and walls of the house and steeple, which Maister of Ovingham answered these words under written :—‘ We be twenty brethren in this house ; and we shall die all, or that ye have this house.’ ” There is a tradition that the brave monk was hanged in front of the priory, over the gateway, for his resistance to “ the king’s most dread commandment of dissolution.” “ It is interesting to detect the traces [in Ovingham] of his dwelling, which comprises the modest schoolroom in which the historian [Mr. Hodgson Hinde], and the wood engraver of Cherryburn, and a host of north-country worthies received their education.” (*Archæologia Æliana*, vi. 124.)

DEATHBED OF ELIZABETH STUART, CROMWELL'S MOTHER.

A CENTURY of years, or near,
Had run their course away,
Since, softly on her cradle-couch,
The infant Stuart lay.

Born when the Virgin Queen was throned,
And christen'd in her name :—
And now, stretch'd on her bed of death,
Her life a flickering flame.

Beside her dying pillow stands
Great Cromwell, England's lord,
Low bending o'er his mother's lips,
To catch her parting word.

“Dear son!” with feeble breath she says,
“I leave my heart with thee :
“Good night!” and with a smile serene,
Her loving soul goes free.

Tears for the dead—and “dust to dust :”
The last sad tribute give.
Then, Lord Protector, forth again,
To live for those who live.

Forth with thy legacy—her heart—
Worn warmly in thy own :
An amulet amid the cares
That wait upon thy throne.

Unmovable, as standing in
Thy great Taskmaster's sight ;
And comforted, in every thing,
To hear her sweet “Good night !”

Fond farewell word ! “Good night,” “Good night,”
Our loved ones softly sigh,
As, one by one, they only feel
The parting hour draw nigh.

“Good night,” they whisper in our ears,
And gently pass away :
“Good night !” and sink to sleep of death.
We'll meet at break of day.

FLORENCE AND ANNIE.

AN EPITAPH.

“At Stockton, on the 24th of March, 1859, aged 2 years and 2 months, Florence and Annie, twin daughters of Mr. Appleby, bookseller.”—*Darlington Times.*

TWIN-BORN they came. Two years, two months,
The two to Earth were given.
Then God reclaim'd his twofold gift,
Twin-born to Earth and Heaven.

RUINOUS RIGHTS,

OR THE BISHOP'S STURGEON.

THE Bishop of Durham, when count-palatine,
Could boast—"The big fishes—whale, sturgeon—are mine.
"If caught in my waters, to me they belong :
"Whoever else keeps them, he does me foul wrong."
And thus it fell out, when five sturgeons were caught
At his manor of Howden, they straightway were brought
To Cosin's glad steward, who largess'd the wight
That gave to his heart such a draught of delight.
Rejoicing as though the good-luck were his own,
His love for his master the bishop was shown.
The sturgeons he placed in the hands of the cook,
Who put his expenses all down in a book.
One, seven, and sixpence for vinegar went,
At twenty the gallon ; and at thirty-two,
One, 'leven, and fourpence for white wine was due.
Scarce less than six pounds altogether was spent,
With dill and rosemary, and other odd things
Used in curing the fishes of bishops and kings.
Five, seventeen, one, to be nice in the count,
Was to an odd penny the total amount.
The sturgeons were cured—preserved were the dues
Of the Church, which some folks are too apt to refuse.
And when the five fishes were duly prepared,
They by the just steward must wisely be shared.
Lord Clarendon—he of the History—got
What a baron might think not too small for his pot.

And so, Lady Gerard and others were sent
Of sturgeon enough to ensure their content.
And Cosin had certainly more than his fill,
When he got from his vigilant steward—the bill.
The bishop (good soul !) had his temper, and wrote
To his manor in Yorkshire a peppery note.
“ What mean you, Sir Steward of Howden,” said he,
“ When with dill and rosemary you’re iteming me ?
“ A pound and some shillings expended for fish,
“ To send to my lord and my lady a dish !
“ Pray catch no more sturgeons for me, or I’m lost
“ If you’re lucky in fishing at so much of cost.
“ Should you happen to ’light in the Ouse on a shoal
“ Of whales, I’d be certainly swallow’d up whole !”

MALCOLM AND MARGARET.

THE end of all his wars,
By Percy’s castle walls
Great Malcolm Canmore, Scotland’s king,
With his son Edward, falls.

The Saxon Margaret lies
Upon her bed of pain :
Her lord and son are long away—
Why come they not again ?

Low whispering voices come :
 "The queen—she must not know."
 In vain ! Her boding ear is quick
 For faintest note of woe.

"How fares it, boy?" she asks
 Her child ; to answer loth.
 "Your father?—brother?—tell me, Sir,
 "How fares it with them both?"

 "Dead, mother ! slain !" he says.
 To Heaven she lifts her eyes,
 And folds her arms. "Thy will be done,"
 She whispers—and she dies.

THE BISHOP'S MOTHER.

ROBERT DE INSULA—Robert of Halieland—
 The Lindisfarne laddie who answers the call
 Of monk and of prior—a kitchen-boy runabout—
 An urchin who's born to be lord of them all.
 Robin is monk—Robin is prior—
 Prior of Finchale—then a step higher.
 Rob of the Isle is the Bishop of Durham when
 The first of the Edwards is wearing the crown.
 He thinks of his mother—he makes her a lady-grand :
 Fair mansion he gives her in which to sit down.

Servants to wait on her—men-servants, maid-servants :

Whatever a woman might ask or desire.

The bishop—(kind son !)—in care for her happiness,

Would have her enjoy all that life could require.

Robert means well—good is he, very :

Kindness, however, will sometimes miscarry.

Robert is passing : he halts, and he calls on her.

“How fares my sweet mother ?” says he to the dame.

“Ne'er worse,” is her answer. Curter than pleasing 'tis.

“And what is it ails thee ?” he begs her to name.

“Has she not serving-men—women enough for her ?”

Inquires the good bishop ; and—“Yes,” then, says she.

“Enough ? aye, and more ! To one I say, ‘Go, fellow !’

“He runs. To another ‘Come !’ Quick on his knee

“Drops down the varlet. I speak—and they wait on me.

“All goes on so smooth—so unwrinkled my lot—

“My heart's fit to break for something to spite me with :

“There's nothing to quarrel with—no, not a jot !”

Robert de Insula—Robert of Halieland—

Why would you make of your mother a lady-grand ?

Why did you take her away from her cottage where,

Keeping one maiden she lived blithe and happy there ?

Sons who get forward, be kind to your mothers dear,

Lift them, however, not quite to another sphere.

Bishops, translated, mayn't find too much comfort by 't :

Quarrels with clergy may temper their high delight.

Quiet old ladies, accustom'd to active life,

Make them too easy not—leave them a little strife.

Robert's reward for a lesson may well suffice :—

Earth mustn't be made too much of a Paradise.

OUR TRIAL STATE.

(THE THOUGHTS FROM LADY RACHEL RUSSELL.)

WE live on trial here,
Probation is our end ;
Then wonder not some crosses He
Should with His comforts send.

There is no passing through
This world to yon on high ;
Without some trials of our faith,
Some clouds across our sky.

And sometimes shifts the scene
So fast, our little day
May end, before we blindly think
That we have gone half-way.

Time flies with rapid wing :
Eternity is near,
Whose happiness depends on how
We spend our moments here.

Live well the allotted time ;
The right, and not the wrong,
Pursue ; you cannot die too soon,
Nor can you live too long.

THE POET'S FUNERAL.*

SILENT and calm the wall'd and sacred garden,
Voice is there none but song of warbling linnet,
Flitting from tree to tree with blossoms laden.
'Mong the green leaves Spring writes with rosy fingers
Promise of Autumn and its rich abundance.
Perfumes of flowers that live but for their beauty,
Float up in incense from the lawn smooth-shaven,
Mingling their fragrance with the luscious odours
Shed by the damask bloom of boughs fruit-fraughten.
From fairy cups of jewell'd gold and silver,
Bees in the sunshine quaff their fill of nectar,
Luxurious draughts of Nature's pure distilment.
Sweet is the air and idle is the Zephyr.
Earth with her children speaks in loving whispers,
God is discoursing in the garden-silence.

Hark ! the deep boom from yonder lofty belfry
Breaks in upon this fair and quiet Eden !
Toll ! toll ! the knell moans, sad and slow and solemn.
Ope fly the doors, and o'er the yellow pathway
Streams the long line of stoled and sable mourners,
Filling with gloom the pleasant spring-time orchard.
Heaven dons in sympathy her mourning garments.
Clouds cast their pall across the dark procession.
Big tear-drops 'mong the branches beat and patter.
Zephyr floats sighing o'er the leaves and blossoms.

* The funeral of Thomas Wilson, Esq., Fell House, Gateshead, author of "The Pitman's Pay," who was born Sunday, November 14, 1773, and died Sunday, May 9, 1858.

Trees wave farewell—trees which his own hands planted,
Who, from his lifelong home, by son and grandson,
Kinsmen and neighbours, borne, departs for ever.
Faces, unseen, are at the shrouded casements,
Watching and weeping o'er his last outgoing,
Anguish'd that he, the loved and the lamented,
Pride of their home, its happiness and honour,
Whose going and whose coming, morn and evening,
Day after day, through years of life-domestic,
Swung to and fro upon the household dial,
Should come and go no more—for ever—never !

Toll, doleful toll ! Onward from house to churchyard,
Blinds dim the light in every cottage-window,
Tribute to him whose death is common sorrow.
Highway and lane are lined all through the village.
Gossips are cluster'd at the open doorways,
Kindling remembrance of his many virtues ;
Proudly recounting to their wondering children,
How, in his childhood, he, too, was a pit-boy,
Toiling for bread there ; but for learning, also ;
Earnest at book and labour ; striving, rising ;
Mounting from pitman up to princely merchant ;
Living and dying where his humble parents
Gave him his birth and good and honest breeding ;
True to his village, faithful to his order ;
Brother and friend to poor and needy alway.

Up in the bell-tower tolls the village-ringer.
Up to the Silent City climb the mourners.
Cleric in surplice reads of hope and comfort—
Faith in the great Hereafter of our being.
Falters the aged clerk in his responses—
Moved from the rote and round of daily custom,
By keen remembrance of his friend and patron.

Now to the yawning grave they bear his body;
And as "the voice from heaven" the priest is naming,
Out bursts the thunder of the answering welkin.
Earth claims its earth—to ashes give his ashes.
Heaven takes its own:—and lo! the serried lightning
Parts the thick clouds, and peals again the thunder.
Nature rejoices o'er her child—her poet—
Eased of the load of more than fourscore winters—
Borne to the land of never-ending summer.

THE SEASIDE BRIDAL.

THE village-street and green are gay
With banners bright of every hue;
And proudly on the yellow sands
Floats England's meteor flag, True Blue.

With note of preparation comes
The all-important morning hour,
When Lady Blanche, in wedding trim,
Must leave for church her bridal bower.

The church in ivy-green is clad;
The bride array'd in virgin white;
In white and pink the bridesmaids fair,
Four comely pairs, are gaily dight.

Two pretty fairies in the rear,
Attired in white and blue, are seen;
And up the shore, with joyous roar,
Old Ocean comes in white and green.

And when the bride walks up the aisle,
The clouds dispart, and on her head,
Through all the lancet-window panes,
A flood of sunny light is shed.

Behind the cloud (so Heaven would teach
This maiden on her wedding-day),
However dark, there shines the sun,
Whose beams shall chase the gloom away.

And as the Lady Blanche comes forth,
And quits the church a happy wife,
An aged dame, "who from a child
"Has known her all her maiden life,"

Invokes a blessing on her head,
With praises on her kith and kin ;
And all that hear her say "Amen,"
For they have lived all hearts to win.

Long thus, upon our happy shores,
May rich and poor be knit in one,
And in each other's joys and woes
Have sympathy beneath the sun !

THE SNOW STORM.

THE sun is high, the sky is blue,
I leave at home my parapluie
(I spell it so for sake of rhyme),
 And going forth in crystal air,
 I wander here, I tarry there,
And come not back till midnight time.
How great the change ! The sky drops down
In pieces o'er the silent town !
Each moment come, with noiseless fall,
A million marvels over all—
A million flakes of heaven descend !
And as my wintry way I wend,
Like a White Lion March comes in,
Muffled in wool up to his chin.
White is the air, white is the street,
White is everybody I meet.
Be she dress'd in blue or black—
Red or brown the cloak on her back—
Every woman I meet to-night
Flits ghostly by, a Woman in White !
Wilkie Collins, in wild romance,
May lead us through a mazy dance ;
Yet what romance so wondrous, say,
As is the life of one short day ?
A breath, unseen, is blown ; and lo !
The viewless air is full of snow !
Over the table that feeds us all,
 A cloth is spread of purest white,
 Miracle of a winter's night !
Wonderful, beautiful sight, Snowfall !

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT.

FROM out the dark, at curfew hour,
A feeble spark of sullen light
Gleam'd forth upon the old church-tower
That crown'd the crowded living height:

A spark that burst to dazzling blaze,
And scatter'd round a quick surprise,
Arresting footsteps, as its rays
Fell down upon a thousand eyes.

On bridge and bank, in street and square,
The startled wanderer paused to scan
The shining sun which mock'd the glare
Of envious gas, struck pale and wan.

The streaming glory grew, and stretch'd
A widening cone of spectral light—
Phantasmagoric pictures sketch'd
Before the wondering eye of night.

What prophecy of things unborn
Is this, that from the steeple streams—
Of some far-off, or nigh, new morn,
To light our world with nobler beams ?

From dimmest point of fire at first,
The ray of heavenly science burns ;
Then comes at last the grand out-burst,
And darkness into daylight turns.

The spark becomes a glowing star,
With lengthening and with widening cone,
Which shineth near—which shineth far—
And men a brighter glory own.

T H E Y E A R .

BREAK, Year, upon the shore of Time,
Break, Year, and die.
Breathe out into the silent Past
Thy latest sigh.

Close up thy work of good and ill,
Of light and shade :
The passing-bell awaits thy death,
Thy grave is made.

No more the clock shall go its round
To mark thy flight :
No sun shall rise again for thee—
Thou diest to-night.

No respite or reprieve. The earth
And stars on high
Bring ruthless round thy parting pang,
And thou must die.

The beating pulse—the ticking clock—
The falling grains—
Count off thy life. Thy days are fled—
Thy last hour wanes.

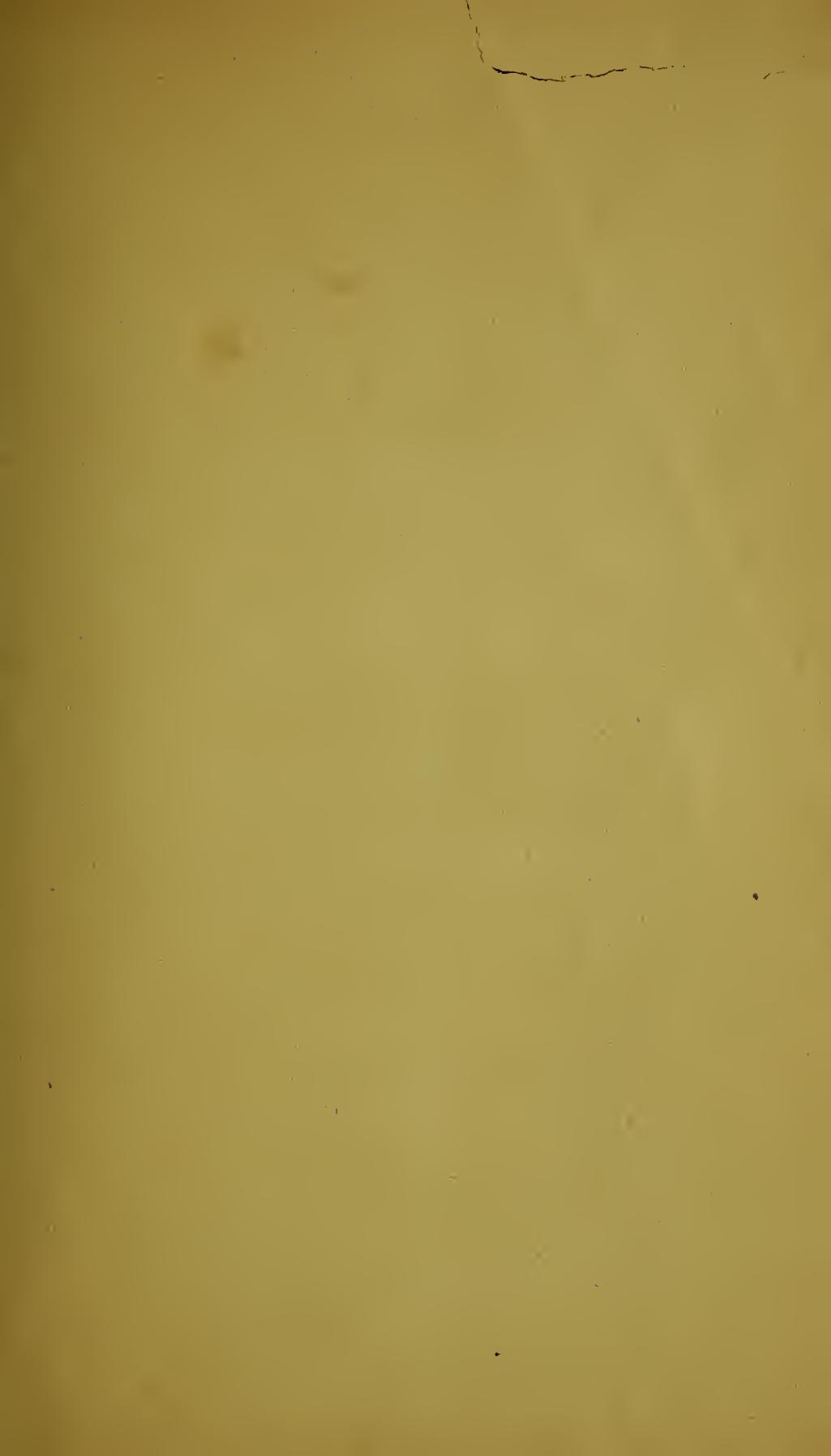
Time's swiftest hand shall sweep no more
The dial's round,
Till from the old church-tower the clock
Thy knell shall sound.

“One, two.” The tongue of Time proclaims
One quarter gone.
The watch-night flies. No pause. And hark !
Two quarters flown.

Linger ! O linger ! silent hand !
The hour prolong.—
Remorseless Time ! thou mock'st my prayer
With stern “Ding, dong !”

One quarter left ! Old Year, prepare
To fill thy bier :
Thy breath is short. And hither comes
The young New Year.

Give out the hour. Let midwife Night
Bring in the Morn.
Pass Death ! come Life ! The changing Year
Is dead ! is born !



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